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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Human rights bodies and mechanisms

Written statement* submitted by the International Career Support Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 August 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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There actually is no such thing as a Ryukyu minority that is being discriminated against: demagoguery and propaganda must not continue to thrive in international society in the 21st century

Within Okinawa today, there is a small but vocal movement to promote the people of Okinawa Prefecture, Japan, as a "Ryukyu Tribe" or "Race." This is not an academic debate but a political movement, being pursued in an illogical manner and with irrational interpretations. Looked at historically, as well as linguistically and genetically, it is clear that the people of Okinawa are Japanese. These are established scientific facts, well known within the academic world. The opinion that this is not the case is a concept that the newspapers are trying to create unilaterally, for political purposes, but not something that is the subject for serious academic debate.

Okinawans are inherently Japanese, a conclusion reached long ago, which is easy to confirm culturally and linguistically. Those that are trying to promote a new concept of the Okinawan people as a "Ryukyu Race" are doing so by changing the very definition of what a people are. It is different from what the United Nations Human Rights Council defines as a "minority," purposely changing its meaning, to suggest that the people of Okinawa Prefecture are not a part of the Japanese race. This is no more than an attempt to separate the people of Okinawa from the rest of Japan.

In addition, those that are arguing in favor of a "Ryukyuan Tribe" or "Race" say that they have been the victims of discrimination by Japan. In other words, they are saying that they are a group being victimized within Japan. This is being used to promote a Ryukyu Independence Movement.

We must debate facts as they are, regardless of national differences or where one finds himself or herself. This is particular true in modern times. Within Japan, there is no so-called Ryukyu Minority, and if anything, Okinawa Prefecture is one of the most free and most protected areas anywhere in the world, where human rights are highly valued and the people live in peace and happiness. The idea of the people of Okinawa Prefecture as a discriminated minority is nothing more than political propaganda, for which the political objectives can be surmised.

In light of the situation in East Asia, China is the country that benefits most by this effort to promote the image "that the people of Okinawa are being discriminated against and thus the 'Ryukyu Race' desires independence." China has previously refused to recognize Okinawa as Japanese territory, and has publicly stated its support of an independence movement. In a worst case scenario, one can see how China would use an independence movement as a reason to invade Okinawa. This danger is strongly present behind the deception of presenting the Okinawan people as a separate race.

Numerous Japanese experts have identified the influence of China, which has made claims to Okinawa before, as behind the Ryukyu independence movement, and as further support for this view is the fact of China's military expansionism in both the East China Sea and South China Sea.

We are deeply concerned that the problem of minorities, taken up by the United Nations Human Rights Council, may be used for such political purposes and desire that the mission of the Council not be misused politically any more.